

Message Text

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ACTION EB-11

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SUBJECT: AN EDITORIAL FOR OIL BILATERALISM

REF: BONN O1326

1. IN AN EDITORIAL APPEARING IN THE FEBRUARY 2
ISSUE OF THE FRANKFURTER ALLGEMEINE ZEITUNG, HAROLD
VOCKE, A MIDDLE EASTERN EXPERT AND FORMER FRG
DIPLOMAT, ARGUES FOR CONCLUSION OF BILATERAL
AGREEMENTS BETWEEN EUROPEAN OIL CONSUMING COUNTRIES
AND PRODUCER GOVERNMENTS. NOTING THAT OIL SHORTAGES
IN THE UNITED STATES HAD PROMPTED THE UNITED STATES,
BEFORE THE OUTBREAK OF THE WAR, TO URGE IMPORTERS
TO INCREASE THEIR OIL SUPPLIES AND CLAIMING THAT THE
U.S. WOULD NOT BE EXPECTED TO SUPPLY EUROPE WITH
OIL IN THE EVENT OF A FUTURE SHORTAGE, VOCKE SAYS
THE LONG TERM BILATERAL DEALS PRESENTLY BEING
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NEGOTIATED SERVE THE INTERESTS OF EUROPE AND DO

NOT DAMAGE THE UNITED STATES. IN ADDITION HE CLAIMS THE DANGER THAT THESE ARRANGEMENTS WILL LEAD TO RUTHLESS COMPETITION AMONG EUROPEANS FOR MIDDLE EAST OIL IS, UP-TO-NOW, LITTLE.

2. CONCLUDING HIS ARTICLE, VOCKE ARGUES THAT A COMMON OIL POLICY AMONG EUROPE, THE US AND JAPAN WILL NOT EASILY BECOME A REALITY, LESS BECAUSE OF THE INDIVIDUAL EGOISM OF THE COUNTRIES CONCERNED, BUT MORE DUE TO THE STYLE OF THE US/MIDDLE EAST POLICY. ACCORDING TO VOCKE, AS LONG AS THE US DOES NOT ALLOW THE UK AND FRANCE, THE COUNTRIES WITH THE MOST MIDDLE EAST EXPERIENCE, TO PARTICIPATE IN THE MOST IMPORTANT DECISIONS, A COMMON WESTERN OIL POLICY WILL REMAIN A DREAM. VOCKE URGES THE EUROPEANS TO REACH AGREEMENT ON A COMMON POLICY TO ASSURE OIL SUPPLIES WHILE CONTINUING TO KEEP THE DIALOGUE WITH THE UNITED STATES OPEN. CLAIMING THAT THE FEBRUARY 11 CONFERENCE WILL LEAD TO MEANINGFUL SUCCESS ONLY WITH DIFFICULTY, DUE TO THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN ENGLAND AND FRANCE ON ONE HAND AND THE US ON THE OTHER, VOCKE REJECTS ANY MAJOR FRG MEDIATING ROLE DUE TO ITS SMALL SIZE IN THE OIL MARKET. RATHER HE SEES THE FRG'S ROLE AS CALALYST FOR REACHING A RAPID DECISION IN DEVELOPING A COMMON, EUROPEAN OIL POLICY.

3. COMMENT. VOCKE'S EDITORIAL PRESENTS ARGUMENTS FOR BILATERALISM AND DEVELOPMENT OF A COMMON EC OIL POLICY WHICH ARE HEARD MORE FREQUENTLY IN BONN THESE DAYS, POSSIBLY REFLECTING THINKING EVEN IN SOME GOVERNMENT QUARTERS.
HILLENBRAND

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